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JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND DFOLEY,
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: UNGA, Syria/Israel, Peace Conference, Iraq, US/Syria
(9/24-27)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on September 27 reported meetings FM Mouallem held on September 25 on the sidelines of the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York. He saw Russian FM SergeyQavrov, High Representative of the EU Common Foreign policy and Security Secretary-General of the Council Javier Solana, the European Commissioner for External Relations Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Iraqi FM Hoshiyar Zebari, and other European Foreign Ministers. A commentary by Syrian Charles Kamleh, in government-owned Tishreen criticized President Bush's UNGA speech saying that "Bush seeks to expand and reactivate the UN role so it can shoulder the burden of repairing what Bush spoiled and to cover up his violations against it and against the world."

Independent al-Watan on September 26 quoted a well informed Syrian political source as denying Western and US media account of the Israeli infiltration into Syrian airspace describing the story of Israeli warplanes landing as "a story modeled along Western movies style."

All major dailies on September 25 ran a statement to the BBC by Information Minister Mohsen Bilal on September 24 saying that Syria had not yet received an invitation to attend the upcoming US-sponsored international conference on the Middle East, saying "when this invitation is sent to Syria, it will be examined." "Syria reiterates the importance of taking into consideration the comprehensive peace in the region and its requirements which provide for establishing an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital and the Palestinian refugees' right of return," Minister Bilal said. He added the Conference must also take into consideration the restoration of occupied Golan to Syria.

Government-owned Al-Ba'th on September 27 featured an editorial by German journalist Volker Perthes published in the "Herald Tribune" on September 20 praising Syria's role in hosting Iraqi refugees and its role in any serious peace effort in the Middle East. Perthes encouraged endorsement of the Syrian-European Association Agreement as saying it will boost economic reforms in Syria pave the way for a political dialogue with Syria.

Papers on September 26 reported that the US Congress will vote this week on a non-binding resolution on partitioning Iraq as proposed by

Senator Joseph Biden.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"The UN Assembly begins its deliberations. UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon: Ending occupation is needed to achieve peace. Qatari President Sheikh Hamed Bin Khalifa: The Iraqi crisis must be tackled through the UN. Bush criticizes the UN for focusing on Israel. President Sarkozy calls for establishing a new world order" (Government-owned Tishreen, 9/26)

"Damascus denies the story of Israeli landing and considers it as a fiction based on Western Movies" (Semi-Independent al-Watan, 9/26)

"Damascus will examine any invitation it receives from the US to attend the international peace meeting, which Washington has decided to hold next November" (Al Watan, 9/25)

"The Austrian Chancellor reiterates Syria's essential and pivotal role in reviving the ME peace process" (Government-owned Tishreen, 9/24)

"The Herald Tribune: Hosting displaced Iraqis is reason to respect Syria's positions" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 9/27)

"Amnesty International: The world community has failed to tackle the crisis of Iraqi refugees and left the burdens on Syria and Jordan" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 9/25)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Under the First and Biggest Dome"

Charles Kamleh, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (9/27): "President Bush's UNGA speech was nothing but a speech of wishes to see the world as Washington wants it to be. This is especially true in his statement that he looks forward to a strong and active United Nations and a greater UN role.... Bush has his motives behind wanting the United Nations to be strong and active! Strong so it can shoulder the burden of repairing what Bush spoiled and active to cover up his violations against the UN and against the world...."

"Yes, no one can deny the growing and pressing international need for a strong and influential United Nations as the optimal framework for dealing with the future challenges, but the world today is absolutely not in need of a United Nations that favors the strong and is only for the strong. This is what puts the United Nations today to the test."

"The Blatant Contradiction"

Muhammad Khair al-Jamali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (9/24): "There is a contradiction between the US position toward the Iranian nuclear file and its rejection of the latest IAEA resolution calling for a WMD-free zone in the Middle East...."

"This contradiction is so clear in the endless number of US stances on the nuclear issue in the world and in the baseless accusations the United States made against countries to cover up its aggressive policy it pursues in coordination with Israel...."

"If the US is really serious about preventing nuclear proliferation, it must prove its seriousness in pursuing a clear, consistent policy without double standards when dealing with nuclear issues and nuclear armament and must ask Israel, before anyone else, to remove its nuclear weapons and abide by the provisions of the IAEA, or else"

it should stop falsely accusing others of things Israel is proved to have practiced."

"What Is Behind Enlarging Syria to the Nuclear Level?"

Khurshid Dali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Watan, wrote (9/24): "The US and Israeli media leaks about a Syrian-Nuclear cooperation mean more direct political pressure on Syria in preparation for an operation against it...."

"If the situation remains as it is, it is not unlikely that there will be calls for sending international inspectors to Syria under the pretext of searching for nuclear weapons...."

"Linking a possible Syrian nuclear capability to North Korea and Iran is part of a studied US-Israeli campaign, whose goals have already been set...."

"Israel wants to dismantle the strategic relationship between Syria and Iran, while the United States wants to put more pressure on Iran with in order to impose rigorous sanctions on it and force Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear weapons...."

"There is also the goal of keeping Syria in a defensive position from within the walls of Damascus and not allowing it to play a regional role toward what is happening in Lebanon and Iraq.... This would isolate Syria and force it to beg peace with Israel in any form...."

"Gaza, an Entity Hostile to Whom?"

An unsigned editorial in government-owned Al-Ba'th on (9/24) reads: "The Israeli declaration of Gaza as a hostile entity and the complete US adoption of the decision raises questions about what Washington and Tel Aviv are planning for the Strip and consequently the Islamic Resistance Movement, HAMAS, following long months of pressure and a choking siege and amid rumors about a climate for a settlement being prepared for under US supervision...."

"By adopting the Israeli declaration, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice sent an extremely meaningful message to those who are still talking about the vagueness of the US call for peace and wagering on a balanced US role or one that is capable of sponsoring a peace process between Arabs and Israel...."

Corbin